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REMARKS

ON

DR. CHANNING'S SLAVERY.

BY A CITIZEN OF MASSACHUSETTS.

BOSTON:

RUSSELL, SHATTUCK AND CO., AND JOHN H. EASTBURN.

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SLAVERY.

CHAPTER I.

The Reverend Dr. Channing has recently been designated in the London Quarterly Review as one of the only "two living classics" in the United States; and our own North American, in anticipation or in echo of its European contemporary, has repeated this title of respect.

This is but the exaggerated expression of that proud rank which he unquestionably holds in the opinion of the literary world. A philosopher, a scholar, a casuist, — at the head of the Unitarian clergy, and connected by numberless associations with the literature, the opinions, and the character of his countrymen, — he can write nothing that will not carry with it a portion of his own personal fame; he can maintain no doctrine that will not derive force from the authority of his reputation; he can advance no opinion on the controverted questions of the day, which will not be received, at home and abroad, as the general sentiment of the community, — or if at first it should be taken for one of those novelties that sometimes startle us by their boldness, it is yet known to fall in the teeming soil of popular admiration, from whence it springs again with exuberant fecundity.

The book which he has recently published, on the exciting subject of Slavery, is the popular wonder of the day. Written with a fervor which bears the evidence of sincerity, with a glow of benevolence that captivates the affections, and a spirit of piety as earnest — though it may be as mistaken — as the zeal of the crusaders, it is still made more captivating by "the elegance, correctness, purity, power, and point, in

the use of lauguage," which are the characteristics of his animated style. With these means of a powerful influence, it is sent forth to operate on one of the most momentous conconcerns which can ever agitate a Christian and a republican people.

From any praise which may be bestowed on this book as a work of art, I have no disposition to detract. *Materiam superabit opus.* With no desire, certainly, to place anything of mine in contrast with the polished periods of the American Addison, I trust it may not be deemed presumptuous, in this day of free discussion and liberal inquiry, fearlessly to examine the scope and tendency of his production, and submit my own reflections to an intelligent and candid community.

I feel the more at liberty to do this, because the professed intention of the Reverend Gentleman is to teach me and other of my fellow-citizens our duty in relation to a subject of great practical and national importance, on which we have a duty to perform that we cannot evade, and to enforce his teachings by the authority of moral law and Christian precept, to whose supremacy we implicitly submit. Holding as high as he does the sanctions to which he appeals, but totally dissenting from his application of them, I am not willing that a departure from his directions and a denial of his precepts, should be deemed a breach of Christian duty or of moral obligation. I will not quarrel with the cathedral spirit in which his commands are conveyed, although it may seem a little too professional, because I may myself need an apology for a professional manner which it is very difficult to shake off. It will not, however, escape observation that an accusation of grievous sins and the assumption of superior sanctity are apt to be deemed departures from that temper of humility, which, as much as anything, is the doctrine of Christian philosophy.

I present the following propositions, to which I shall ask the attention of the reader.

First. Public sentiment in the free States, in relation to Slavery, is perfectly sound, and ought not to be altered.

Second. Public sentiment in the Slave-holding States, whether right or not, cannot be altered.

Third. An attempt to produce any alteration in the public sentiment of the country, will cause great additional evil — moral, social, and political.

The doctrine of the Northern States is :

1. That Domestic Slavery is a deep and dreadful evil.

2. That its continuance or removal is solely within the power of the domestic legislation of the State in which it exists.

3. That it is a breach of our highest political contract, and a violation of good faith and common honesty, to disturb the internal condition and domestic arrangements of the Slave-holding States.

The first of these positions has been so long acknowledged and so recently repeated, that it needs no additional enforcement, and he who attempts to stir up the public mind to a stronger feeling or a deeper glow of indignation, does in effect join that little band of fanatics whose imprudent agitation has deranged the peace of the community.

Whatever may be the disclaimer of our author, his book does this, and in the sensitive region of slavery will be keenly felt to have done this ; and all the troubles caused by the inferior agents in this work of commotion, will be reproduced and augmented under the influence of his authority.

What possible benefit is to be gained by repeating, in every inflection of taste and style, and with all the gorgeousness of rhetoric, long established truisms which nobody denies ? Why are we told that, by the moral law, there can be no property in a human being, when, for more than half a century, the soil of New-England has not been pressed by the foot of a domestic slave ? Why are we told that man, every man, however obscure his condition, is a rational, moral, immortal being, when the doctrine, familiar from childhood, is the daily and constant sentiment of our Christian community ? Why are we told in detail of the vast evils of Slavery ? of the moral and social and personal degradation that it brings with it ? of

the sin and misery and wretchedness in which, with retributive justice, it involves all classes of the community in which it is found? This, and more than this, is the common feeling of our New-England population. As addressed to us, this glowing and exciting language is useless for conviction, and powerful only for excitement to useless anger or unjustifiable action.

As addressed to the South, it is but a reiteration of the deep and powerful feeling which, to a very great extent, prevails among its best informed and well principled people. But, to them, it comes with all the bitter insult of intentional mockery.

Suppose Slavery is the deep and dreadful evil which is represented. Suppose the impassioned eloquence of a virtuous indignation gathers the whole world in one simultaneous outcry of reprobation and disgust. There it is — there it remains. There, in spite of all this outcry, still rests and will rest, this entailed curse of their country.

Suppose the pretended masters of more than two millions of human beings, warned by Dr. Channing's denunciations, as by another earthquake, awaking out of their deep sleep of sin, come running to this modern Paul, with the heart-breaking exclamation — *Sir, sir, what shall we do to be saved?* Has our apostle of freedom one word of consolation or instruction to give them? Has he devised the way of their escape from the moral guilt in which he tells them they are plunged? Does he propose any remedy for this leprosy of their souls? Is there any pool of Siloam in which, by his direction, they may wash and be clean?

None is known — nothing is proposed. No human security has been or can be suggested, that has the slightest practical efficiency. The Catholic priest, when he brings his penitent to the confessional, has some relief for his conscience; but here all is desolation and despair.

A practical philosopher would not think this mode of discussion calculated to wake the conscience. Its tendency is

to rouse the passions and arm the supposed criminal for defence.

If there is no known remedy, why taunt a man with his condition? His condition may be a misfortune; but it ceases to be his crime. Evils enough there are, inseparable from domestic Slavery, without adding to them the irritation and anger of a whole people. Present pain, apprehension of future danger, uncertain, indefinite, but on that account more alarming, press everywhere on the free population of a slave country. They live, and they know they live on the crater of a volcano, which every moment may pour forth its concealed but certain fires, in a torrent of indiscriminate destruction.

The duty of Christianity, it seems to me, is not to excite strong abhorrence in one portion of the community, which may lead them to break the bounds of moderation and prudence, nor to excite in another angry and hateful feelings, and stir up their resentment and revenge. Sympathy is due to the white man as well as the slave. Affectionate and generous assurance of regard, kindness, protection, are due to the white woman of education and virtue, to innocence and beauty, to the feebleness of infancy and the helplessness of age, to the mothers, sisters, wives and daughters of our own race, as well as to the tawny-colored children of bondage.

I object to the severe and indiscriminate national reflections, which this teacher of morals deems himself at liberty to throw on our slave-holding countrymen. True or false, they are alike objectionable.

"Malicious slander," says an approved writer, "is the relating of truth or falsehood, for the purpose of creating misery." Such purpose would undoubtedly be denied by our author; but if misery is not the consequence, it will not be for want of poison in the shaft, but vigor in the bow.

If domestic Slavery, as the book avers, nourishes in the master of slaves the passion for power and its kindred vices, annihilates the control of Christianity, and is necessarily fatal to the purity of a people, — if a slave country reeks with licentious-

ness and crime — if it is tainted with a deadlier pestilence than the plague — it is unfortunate for our own moral habits that the facts were not known to our fathers, before they bound our virtuous New England in a bond of amity and fellowship to all this iniquity and wretchedness. But it may be inquired with anxiety when this discovery was made, and why are

> All their faults observed,
> Set in a note book, conn'd by rote
> To cast into their teeth —

Are we to continue united to all this moral putrefaction notwithstanding its offensiveness, or shall we cut the cords that bind us, and part in disgust ?

A practical moralist is bound to find a remedy for the evils he enumerates, or keep silence till he can. We are perhaps to *reform* them, beginning the glorious work in the spirit of the Jewish Pharisee by thanking God we are not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as these publicans.

Until this reformation is accomplished we must go on together with all these accompaniments of viciousness and crime. But the slave country is to be a slave country for the present generation. What frantic abolitionist dreams of earlier universal freedom ?

Prayer meetings may be held by the faithful. Women, and men like women may meet in secret conclave and preach about it. Little children may loose their gingerbread and give their cents to purchase tracts. Foreign renegadoes, whom fanaticism sends to us and folly encourages, may agitate the community with inflamatory exhortations and specious discourse. The gifted and fair, whom the misplaced hospitality of an abused people flatters into a brief notoriety, may join their factitious consequence to the throng, and even the splendor of great talents, the reputation of great piety and the influence of a great name may bring all the resources it possesses to remove Slavery from the land, but the day of de-

liverance will not dawn upon us till all who now hold slaves and all who reproach them for it, and the slaves themselves who are the present living objects of pity and piety and sympathy and love, shall be together alike the "unsubstantial images of air."

In my judgment the time will be protracted by these general accusations. The effect of them is to produce obduracy in error and resentment for indignity; to sustain a man in his vices by all motives of self-respect, and rouse his hatred to the officious intruder who dares, with words of charity on his lips, to violate the rights of personal responsibility and assume the offices of inquisitor and judge. But general accusations are never true. It is in vain to make nice distinctions which are appreciated only by scholars. The national character, real or imputed, is felt to attach to every individual whether he himself be or be not a partaker of the national vice. Yet as many men in the worst districts of a civilized community are free from the iniquity which is ascribed to the whole, general accusation becomes personal injustice, and injustice in the guise of morality unites upon itself all the odium which the world vents upon arrogance and hypocricy.

Besides the extreme offensiveness of national reflections, there is a passage of such point and particularity that scarcely a husband or father in the slave country can fail to consider it a personal affront.

"Early licentiousness is fruitful of crime in mature life. How far the obligation to conjugal fidelity, the sacredness of domestic ties, will be revered amid such habits, such temptations, such facilities to vice, as are involved in slavery, needs no exposition. So terrible is the connexion of crimes! They, who invade the domestic rights of others, suffer in their own homes. The household of the slave may be broken up arbitrarily by the master; but he finds his revenge, if revenge he asks, in the blight which the master's unfaithfulness sheds over his own domestic joys. A slave-country reeks with licentiousness. It is tainted with a deadlier pestilence than the plague."

It is among the most fruitful and pathetic subjects of Dr. C.'s complaint that there is nothing sacred in the home of the slave; that the master enters it with impunity and dis-

solves those ties of conjugal fidelity by which the dearest relations of life are maintained. If it be so, it is a grievous offence, and sorrow and shame be on the nefarious agent in that scene of depravity.

But it would seem that the negro's hut is not the only one that may be exposed to the licentiousness not indeed of lust but of slander.

In the passage above quoted the charge is so general that no one may consider himself exempted. It is not made against the obscure, the low, the ignorant, the vulgar. It attaches to whatever in that country is deemed to be noble, elegant, refined, dignified or accomplished. It is the slave's master — the planter's family — the home of the opulent — the educated, the distinguished; the bed of the chivalrous, the high-minded, the eminent in the council or the field that is said to be desecrated by unfaithfulness. Their wives and daughters by their own impurity satiate the slave's revenge for the ignominy which in the common course of events taints his domestic joys ! !

A writer, so proverbially accurate as our author, can claim no indulgence for the ardor of composition. Thus the passage reads without discrimination, or exception for age, rank, station, *or sex*.

It is not necessary to multiply extracts, to impress on the reader the force of the remark, that such statements, addressed to our own people, are calculated to produce an excitement more extravagant and uncontrolable than has yet appeared; and, addressed to the slave-holders, have the inevitable tendency to call up an angry state of mind, wholly inimical to any useful results. On their part, they will complain, not of injury, but of insult. They will not be satisfied with the limitations here and there interspersed, in the course of our author's remarks, because the evils of Slavery, as he describes them, are treated as inseparable from its existence, and attach, in a great degree, to all slave-holders. The sin is on them all. The wrong, the injustice, the oppression is practised by all; and the retaliation and revenge, "by the terrible connex-

ion of crimes," falls upon all. The indignation, which it called up in the North by this mode of discussion, is and must be directed to all. We know the fiery character of the slave-holders. Dr. C. describes it strongly:

"A quick resentment of whatever is thought to encroach on personal dignity — vehemence of the vindictive passions — and contempt of all laws, human and divine, in retaliating injury; these take rank among the virtues of men, whose self-estimation has been fed by the possession of absolute power."

With such views of their temperament, it is surprising he should deem his mode of attack calculated to accomplish the professed object of his book. It is pouring oil on a conflagration.

CHAPTER II.

The continuance or removal of Slavery is solely within the power of the domestic legislation of the States in which it exists.

On this point, I do not find that our author differs from the common sentiment of his fellow-citizens; though, indeed I could have wished to see the political duty of the Northern States a little more distinctly affirmed. He does, however, declare that the question, "how Slavery shall be removed, is a question for the slave-holder, and one which he alone can fully answer;" and that, "we have no right of interference, nor do we desire it."

Upon this, I remark that there is in the book a singular discrepancy between the means and the end, and a direct assumption of the right which is disclaimed.

The means proposed are moral influences. To have any effect, they must find their way into the mind and heart of the slave-holder. The end, which we call Abolition, the slave-holders consider a request to give up, waste, annihilate, what

they estimate to be worth to them about five hundred millions of dollars.

The moral influence, which is to work this stupendous miracle in their hearts, is first to commence by persuading them that they are guilty of atrocious crime ; then it is to make them penitent for their deep transgressions, — and, as penitence is nothing without reformation, they are to be induced to part with this accumulation of ill-gotten wealth, and surrender it at the instigation of an authorized minister of the gospel of peace ! !

Surely, the first step in this gigantic enterprise, should be to conciliate the confidence and esteem of the patients, upon whom it is to be essayed. A prudent and skilful necromancer, before he could expect to charm them out of their fortunes, would endeavor to win his way to their hearts. Peter the hermit, when he preached a crusade, dealt out his promises as liberally as his threats, and assured his devoted hearers that, although they might die in Palestine, they should wake in Heaven. Some politic priests, who have the credit, in modern times, of being extremely successful in obtaining property for pious uses, have opened the strong box with the key of love, — or, if the terrors of the confessional have induced some miserable penitent to plate sin with gold, it was when the extravagance of his fears had swallowed up his judgment.

The attempt, in the present case, is greater than was ever conceived by the Vatican, and one which, in no age of the church, would have been made as a requisition of authority.

An Unitarian clergyman goes on a desperate enterprise, when he attempts to awe men or frighten them into a compliance with his will. He may deride, if he pleases, the arrogance of the slave-holder, and describe it as the consequence of power habitually maintained over one or two hundred dependents ; but what will the slave-holder say, in return, of that temper of mind which ventures to intimidate five millions of freemen, by menace, denunciation, and indignity.

If, indeed, we mean to fight the slaves free, it is of no mo-

ment how angry we make their masters ; but if we really intend to use moral means and the powers of persuasion, it is extremely unfortunate that we give them strong reason to believe we are not sincere.

3. It is a breach of our highest political contract, and a violation of good faith and common honesty, to disturb the internal condition and domestic arrangements of the slave-holding States.

I assume this position to be self-evident. At any rate, I do not address myself to those who deny it.

The only open question is, does this book and its doctrines interfere with the internal condition and domestic arrangements of the slave-holding States ?

First, I say, they are intended to do it. Slavery is established by law ; and the object of this publication is to abolish it. If, in the opinion of our author, his book will not, and cannot disturb the existing relations of Slavery, it was a work of gratuitous folly to publish it.

Second. The press is the only power that can be used to disturb the domestic arrangements of Slavery. It is not imagined that any *law* in Massachusetts can operate in Carolina, or that we are to move with an army to put down our white fellow-citizens. No other interference is possible but the interference of the press ; and he who uses it in a manner to produce a dissolution of the relations of Slavery, does what he can and all he can to produce that disturbance which honor, truth, and conscience bind us not to excite.

Is it said this book is not, by its manner, calculated to produce disturbance among slaves ? Let us examine it. Think you, if Dr. Channing was to go into the slave country, and, gathering round him a hundred negroes, preach the doctrines to them which he has published to us, it would be likely to produce disturbance ? Or, what is the same thing, if he should send his book to some free negro, who should mount a stump, and read to his race, would it produce disturbance ? Is it a book that any slave-owner would permit to be published on his plantation ? Is the existence of the book good cause

of alarm to him, and an inducement to greater care that it should not be circulated? Nobody can doubt upon these points.

The only remaining inquiry is, will the doctrines of this book reach the ears of the slaves?

Whether they do or not, Dr. C. is equally culpable, by his own system of morals. For, by printing the book, he has done what he can to give it to the world.

But it will get to its destination. Sooner or later, its doctrines will reach the slave. The world is one great whispering-gallery, whose faintest echos are reverberated by the press. Slowly, but surely, whatever it publishes moves through inferior agents and reaches all ears deeply concerned in its relations.

Now inquire what is the doctrine which the writer advances. Upon this, I have a word to say to him as a logician. He does not follow out his own premises. He disavows the conclusions, directly, plainly, irresistibly, deduced from his own positions, and appears to me to be oppressed with the horror, which no human being can escape from, who looks with steadiness and constancy on the immense moral evil, which, in the character of a Christian moralist, his doctrine is bringing on the country.

I charge him — in spite of his disclaimer — with *the doctrine of* Insurrection. He inculcates the right of insurrection on the whole slave population of the United States. It is immaterial that he contradicts himself. It is in vain that he abjures this act in absolute terms. If the necessary and fair and only proper deduction from his principles is insurrection; if all sound reasoning from his declared principles leads to it; if all rational men must so understand it; if the stupidest slave would so receive it; if it requires false logic and sophistry to escape from it; — then it is insurrection that he preaches; and for its horrors, when they come, and for their evils, in anticipation, he is answerable, to the extent of his exertion, at the tribunal of public opinion and the bar of God.

This is a grave charge; but it is easily demonstrated.

The whole doctrine of his book is, that man, under no possible circumstances, can be rightfully made a slave. On the twenty-ninth page, the position that has before been repeated in every form and with every variety of illustration, is summed up in the following forcible and impressive words:

"We have thus seen that a human being cannot rightfully be held and used as property. No legislation, not that of all countries or worlds, could make him so. Let this be laid down, as a first, fundamental truth. Let us hold it fast, as a most sacred, precious truth. Let us hold it fast against all customs, all laws, all rank, wealth, and power. Let it be armed with the whole authority of the civilized and Christian world."

The negroes in the Southern States are made slaves by acts of legislation and the coercive power which is exercised under those acts. If these acts were repealed, every slave would be as free as Dr. Channing. But if these acts of legislation are already made void by a power superior to all human constitutions and governments, if they cannot accomplish what they propose to accomplish, they have done nothing — they no more operate upon the negro within their jurisdiction, than upon the white man beyond it. There is, then, no *legal* Slavery, and can be none. The force, therefore, that restrains the slave, is oppression, injustice, tyranny, despotism; and if, against all this, a man may not rightfully rebel, if, when he is thus unjustly made a slave for life, and his wife and children are made slaves with him, he may not rise, in his strength or his madness, and shake off his chains, and stand guiltless before God, with the blood of his oppressor on his hands, it is in vain to talk about human rights.

It is absurd to tell of wrongs without remedy. For every human wrong there is a remedy; by law, when the law provides one, and by resistance, when under the color of law, instead of a remedy we find only a wrong.

Could we doubt a moment about this, if the law of Carolina should propose to detain every white traveller passing through its territory, and turn him on the plantation as a slave? In such case, the law would be no more invalid and unjust than Dr. C. represents the laws about negro slaves. But is there

a heart in New England that would not beat high with sympathy for the abused white man? Is there an arm that would not reach him a dagger, if it could? Is there a tribunal on earth, or any law of Heaven, that would not excuse — excuse, did I say? — that would not command him to watch for his opportunity, *and make himself free?*

If a human being is made a slave under color of a law which is nothing but the law of force, which is against right, justice, and the will of God, which gives no title and can convey no property in his person, which is criminal and void in its conception and its continuance, all moral and Christian doctrine, all sound reasoning, and that spirit of humanity which makes man superior to a brute, gives him the right of resistance and tells him to use it.

But, says Dr. C. — alarmed, unquestionably, at the dangerous precipice to which he was tending — "government, indeed, has ordained Slavery, and to government the individual is *in no case* to offer resistance."

Such a sentiment is fit only for a slave. It is the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance which was scouted from all human creeds, with the same breath that blew away the divine right of kings and the dogmatical pretensions of the clergy.

Government is to be resisted by the sacred right of revolution and the inherent and original right of rebellion, in those extreme and dreadful emergencies which carry with them their own justification. If government, when without right and against moral principle and Christian duty, it subjects two millions of human beings to abject Slavery, whom God made free and intends, in his holy will, should continue to be free — if government may not, in such case, be resisted by them, all our sentiments of freedom are wrong — all reverence for our own revolution is folly — all respect for the liberty we enjoy is no more than idle pretension and senseless extravagance.

Does our learned theologian expect to shield himself from animadversion by the use of the term "individual"? It would be a quibble unworthy his character. An individual

citizen, in an organized government, appeals for redress to the law. But in the occurrence of such an unsupposable case as that he should be doomed to death or slavery, without trial or justice, his right of resistance revives, which, under common circumstances, is suspended. It may be useless to him, but not the less perfect.

But the slaves are not to be treated as a case of a single, solitary individual. There are more than two millions of them, and nearly as many as the number of American citizens in 1776. There are three times the number of the whole population of Massachusetts ; and if any government, foreign or domestic, was to doom the free-born and gallant sons of our Commonwealth to Slavery, and there was one of them that should tell you that government must not in such case be resisted, he would be fit for the Slavery to which he was destined — aye, truly, to be the slave of slaves.

One cannot but be struck with the opposition between the course of our author and the Bible, from which he professes to draw his artillery, as explained by Dr. Wayland, whose most practical and able elements of moral science he quotes, with deserved approbation.

If the Bible, says Dr. W., had forbidden the *evil* of Slavery instead of subverting the *principle*, if it had proclaimed the unlawfulness of Slavery and taught slaves to resist the oppression of their masters, it would instantly have arrayed the two parties in deadly hostility throughout the civilized world.

Dr. Channing is not contented with subverting the principle. He assumes to forbid the sin.

He undertakes to proclaim the unlawfulness of Slavery, and thereby teaches the right of resistance, and as a consequence, does what he can to array that deadly hostility which the wiser teachings of the gospel were intended to prevent.

It would be astonishing that, with his intellectual acuteness, he should have disregarded this plain distinction between his own course and his master's, but that we know the power of enthusiasm, like Slavery, "to blind its supporters to the plainest truth."

The argument of Dr. C. is as unsound in its logic as it is refined, extravagant and dangerous in its morality and horrible in its consequences.

His fallacy is one very common to enthusiasts. He assumes a proposition to be universally true which is true only with important qualifications and many limitations.

His conclusion is based on the premises that no property can be made to exist in a human being.

This is but partially true even in Massachusetts. We admit a limited property in human beings. A father has a property in his child ; a master in his apprentice ; a ship-captain in his mariners ; a general in his soldiers. Their labor belongs to him, and their services, like those of the slave, may be enforced even by stripes.

Property is the creature of municipal law. It exists nowhere without law ; and everywhere is inherent in everything which is made property by law.

It may be an unwise, impolitic and cruel law, but still it has its effect.

Where is the authority for the declaration that there can be no property in a human being ? In the Bible ? Slavery is recognized under the Mosaic and christian dispensation without censure In History ? Slavery has existed in all time in the fairest regions of the earth and among the most civilized portions of mankind. Our own government not long since made a claim on Great Britain for the value of the property of our citizens in some hundred human slaves. The principle was admitted by the English nation. The amount to be paid was referred to the arbitration of the Emperor of Russia. Our claim was allowed, the money received, and distributed to the claimants for their loss of their property in slaves.

We acknowledge the existence of such property whenever we seize and return a runaway slave on the application of his master ; and our Supreme Court, refering to the period when Slavery was recognized here by law, have in numerous instances adjudicated important rights on the doctrine that where slavery does exist or has existed by the law of the

land, such law did admit and must be now deemed to admit the existence of property in human beings.

If it be true now that no law can make man a slave, it was true always. Discovery of truth does not make truth. It was as true in the days of Pharaoh that the earth moved round the Sun as it is now, although nobody knew it.

If we are to adjudicate to-day on a law of the last century, and now for the first time discover that what was taken for truth was not truth, we must now declare it. If no human power could make a slave, no human power has a right to say that any man is, or that any man has been a slave. But the doctrine of Dr. C. applied to civil rights has been overruled by the first statesmen and jurists of the country, and I venture to say never will be received with any favor by practical men.

If it is not from scripture or history, legislation or jurisprudence that Dr. C. derives authority for his argument, whence does it come? From a refined and elaborate metaphysical subtilty wholly incomprehensible to a great part of mankind — from new light in the recesses of his study, from some double distillation which by a novel process of alchemy he has been able to effect on the dry bones of ancient morality.

But while he has thus in his own estimation converted dross into gold, while he comes forward as the discoverer of a new elixir of life for the mortal and decaying principles of mankind, while he proposes to effect by it an entire revolution in the manners, sentiments and feelings of the civilized world, it would have been kind in him rather to have spoken in the style of pity than of censure, and instead of accusing the slaveholder of his sins and his crimes, have been lenient to past transgressors on the recollection of their ignorance.

New discoveries in moral science like the nostrums of the quack win their way slowly into the favor of mankind. We are apt to be jealous of that inventor who assumes to be wiser than past ages, or better than the present. We subject his experiment to a careful analysis; we revise his process with coolness; and when we detect the error of his theory and the

danger of his practice, we only add another to the list of those delusions with which a man more easily deceives himself than the world.

"Dr. C. takes it for granted that no reader would be so wanting in moral discrimination and moral feeling, as to urge that men may rightfully be seized and held as property because various governments have so ordained."

This is a departure from the question. The conformity of human law to the supposed will of God is one thing, the operation of actual existing law is another. Property is the result of human legislation, and not of divine command, and whether men or beasts are or are not property, may or may not be property, can or cannot be used, treated, held, sold or bartered as property, is a question solely referable to the law of the land.

This idea of going behind and beyond the law to find a a rule for human action in civil society is getting to be somewhat alarming

One man thinks the law of marriage is a monopoly and should be abolished; another thinks a distillery is an abomination in the eye of Heaven and that its owner is out of the protection of all human law, though it includes him in its terms. Some men believe that there ought to be a community of goods, by a plain indication of Providence, and some who do not care much about Providence, join in the denunciation of the laws. Some men think that the transportation of the Sunday mail is a great violation of holy time, and if they had their way would lay a weekly embargo on the post office. Some men think that the law which punishes a felon with death involves the whole country in the guilt of murder. Indeed there is no end to the vagaries of the human intellect. If we once go beyond the law to ascertain in what property or rights consist, we put every thing in society on the wild ocean of uncertainty. The law is the expression of public wisdom — when in public judgment it is wrong it will be changed.

Dr. C. probably means to say that the law which makes property of a slave is inconsistent with the law of God. In

deciding this question the Doctor is not to be sole judge. It is a question about which other men quite as eminent have the same right of opinion. Its true solution is to be ascertained by the condition and circumstances of the case.

As a general proposition this is declared to be false by the universal past legislation of the world, and by no men more emphatically than by our own eminent civilians and jurists.

If our Supreme Court could be asked the question whether human law could convey any right of property against the principles of sound morality, religion and the will of God, I have no doubt they would by an unanimous opinion decide that it could not. If they had to adjudicate on the question whether the law of Massachusetts before the constitution of 1780 did make property of a slave, they would as readily decide that it did. They have done so again and again.

CHAPTER III.

There are those among us who are ready to exclaim — What are consequences to us? Are we not free men? May we not publish the truth? Have we not the right of free discussion, as one of the elements of public liberty?

I admit, in its fullest and broadest latitude, the legal *right* of free discussion; but I insist that this, like all other human rights, is to be controlled by a high moral responsibility.

While the legal right may be admitted, in its fullest and most perfect existence, the expediency of the exercise of such a right is a matter of the most grave consideration. All that is legally right is not expedient; and whatever is clearly and palpably inexpedient, ceases for the time to be morally right.

It would be a shameful abuse of political liberty to do, at all times and under all circumstances, everything that is not prohibited by public law. The commands of honor, of conscience, and of duty, are as strong in a republic as in a des-

potism. They can be safely relaxed nowhere. In the one case, they are enforced by the commands of the monarch; in the other, they are referred to the protection of the people; and in either case, if their dictates are violated, there is the same necessary and unavoidable consequence — the demoralization of the public character.

Under the administration of a free government there is the stronger obligation for personal restraint, because it is to the personal, and not the public power, that the good order of society is mainly entrusted.

If the statute-book contained no law against arson, it would not follow that a midnight incendiary might wrap his neighbor's dwelling-house in flames. But the statute, necessary as it now is, may be safely repealed whenever society arrives at that state of perfection in which the moral principle will be strong enough to afford general protection.

If there is no law of the land that prohibits the free discussion of the most dangerous and exciting subjects of public inquiry — if the necessary freedom of popular government does not permit the arm of the law to stop the pen or the press, it is on the presumption — which, like other fictions of law, is sometimes strangely at variance with fact — that there is a moral and prudential principle, quite as operative and efficacious for the protection of society. It is on the presumption that they who have the power to move the mass of the community, will have the discretion to do it wisely; that they, whose education, talents, and learning, "preaching to stones would make them moveable," will take care that they do not remove the foundation stones upon which the temple of national liberty is erected.

When, therefore, we admit the perfect right of free discussion as uncontrolled and uncontrollable in our government of laws, we do it with the obvious qualification, that whatever of evil tendency the government does not restrain by force, individuals will restrain by inclination; and that whenever there is a breach of the great law of general security, by inflammatory and dangerous discussions, the inefficiency of the govern-

ment will be more than supplied by the reprobation of the people.

There is a growing tendency to disregard this broad axiom, without which a democracy could not subsist. There is an increasing disposition to use to its extreme the liberty of the constitution, to forget that republican government is self-government, and that self-government involves on the citizen an obligation to do that for himself which the peace and good order of the State requires, and which, elsewhere, he is compelled to do by the irritating interference of public authority.

I know very well that Dr. Channing disclaims "agitation" and all "indiscriminate and inflammatory vituperation of the slave-holder." But how much better than such vituperation are the highly-colored and exciting pictures of sin, ruin, disgrace, which this modern Angelo brings upon his canvass, in the freshness of instinctive life. How much more excusable are his strong appeals to duty and pride of character, and the lofty spirit of our people, which ring like the war-trumpet on the field of battle, to stir up the passions of mankind. But, are they true? Suppose they are. How much is this a reason for quietness and peace. How much is the artist, whose splendid and costly engravings were lately burned by order of a court of justice, excusable, because every delineation of his pencil was most exactly faithful to nature. Truth, like nature, may not always be exhibited without the excitement of feelings, appetites, and passions, that a wise and practical philosopher would deem it dangerous to move.

If a discussion of Slavery, in its actual state and condition in our country, excites in the people of the free States, indignation, resentment, and pity; if it produces in New England horror, abhorrence, and contempt, it must lead to action, in which these convulsions of the mind will pour out its concentrated fires, or it will compel us to brood, in sullen malignity and silence, over the compressed passions that policy stifles in the heart. We must be open enemies or false and deceitful friends. If no action is proposed, and no safe action can possibly be devised for us, there is no alternative but sullen-

ness and hatred. The bonds of our political union may remain indeed undivorced; but we have prepared for ourselves a condition of connubial wretchedness, to which their actual dissolution would be infinitely preferable.

CHAPTER IV.

Public sentiment in the slave-holding States cannot be altered.

This arises from a very melancholy consideration, but one which it is necessary should be deeply considered.

Domestic Slavery is, in the United States, so intimately connected with civil society, that it can never be removed but by one of those tremendous convulsions in which nations perish.

I speak not merely of the destruction of popular government, of the overturn of our democracy and the substitution of another. I say nothing of the dissolution of the Union and the establishment of several feeble and independent States. I speak not of civil war and its concomitants of butchery, massacre, and blood. Far less do I limit the statement to the waste of property, the desolation and ruin, the wretchedness and poverty of houseless and helpless fugitives from their own comfortable homes. I speak not of the deluge of crime that would sweep like another flood over all the moral monuments of the country; but of CHAOS *come again*, in the utter annihilation of all the elements of which our social, civil, religious and political institutions are created.

I speak to sensible men who see this danger, and to conscientious men who tremble at it. I speak to firm men, who will not think it a mark of courage to brave its horrors, or of intrepidity to conceal them. I speak to practical, experienced business men, who know, by actual contact, the force of human motives and the rage of human passion, and not to the

theoretical and secluded scholar, who would give lessons in his study for the measure of a whirlwind. I speak to the bold and venturous navigator on the great ocean of life, who has heard the roar of the elements and felt the strain of the cordage ; and not to the little pilot of a pleasure-boat, who never ventures beyond the ripple of a summer's breeze.

I utter the declaration with grief; but the pain of the writer does not diminish the truth of the fact. I speak it to men whose generous and noble spirits would shrink from no sacrifice that would alter the fact, whose blood would be poured out like water if it could wash this record from existence, but who know and feel that it is the record of immutable truth, over which no human power can prevail ; and I give utterance to it now, because every effort to remove the condition of domestic Slavery in the United States tends to produce a catastrophy, first to be written in the blood of purity and innocence, and then effaced by the ashes of everything valuable in the land.

Why this should be so cannot be explained. Possibly as a balance in the operations of Heaven, for the the unparalleled blessings of our extensive and prosperous republic ; possibly as a trial for those virtues, which need calamity as well as happiness ; possibly as the mode by which our nation, like the mouldering empires of the elder world, shall come to its termination ; possibly for some mysterious reasons yet to be developed in the wisdom of Providence ; possibly for some cause, like the minor evils of life, never to be made manifest to human reason.

We are concerned with the fact more than with its cause.

Is it true then that Domestic Slavery is the perpetual and immoveable condition of our national existence ?

Let us examine very summarily actual facts. It is now firmly established in fourteen States and Territories of the Union and in the District of Columbia, the centre and common property of the whole. This slave District is the fairest and most fertile portion of the United States. It is the most progressive in population — the most extensive in terri-

tory, and of course most likely to advance in influence and political power in the government of the country. Without adopting in their full force all Dr. C.'s disparaging reflections on the character of white men within a slave district, it is obvious that the circumstances under which they are placed are not very favorable to the operation of nice speculative morality when it comes in opposition to direct personal interest. The population, already five millions, will double and quadruple in a short time by force of its natural productiveness and by new emigration. The natives born grow up accustomed to the state of things around them. The immigrants go there acquainted with the laws and customs of the country, which they prefer to those of the adjacent free States. They go to better their worldly affairs, and with very insignificant exceptions, not as promulgators of a new faith or reformers of existing principles. Slavery is established by law in this vast territory and always has been from its first settlement by Europeans. This law does not indeed change its proper character, but it is the indication of the sentiment of the people as to that character, and speaks the popular opinion of the country. By force of that law a slave is property and may be owned, bought and sold as any other article of merchandize. His time and labor are his owner's, and the profits of his labor belong to his master. He is of course productive property. However abhorrent all this may sound in our ears, we must hear it and give it weight. We are dealing now not with theories but with facts. Not discussing abstract rights, but actual realities; not what ought to be but what is. Slaves then are in fact property. They are the wealth and fortune of the planters. We know how intimately property enters into all the relations of life, especially any kind of property which has been long understood and possessed, and has the peculiarities of being fixed or moveable at the will of the owner. In the division of estates property in slaves is considered a part of the inheritance as much as bank stock; and it may happen that while one heir takes the money of his ancestor, others divide the land and the slaves at their estimated value. As

property, debts are contracted on a pledge of slaves and slaves are disposed of to pay the debts of their master. Here are the obvious direct operations of the property character of the slave population. Like articles of merchandize elsewhere, like leather, flour, sugar, cotton, coffee, ships, cloths, paper, or whatever is used among us for property and with which the industry and enterprise of our citizens is concerned, this species of property is in the slave district the indirect means of a great proportion of all the activity and industry which is there visible in the accumulation of profit. It is an item indeed in the aggregation of capital which is not here particularly the subject of barter, the item, namely, of disposable human labor. It resembles the value which is represented with us by the labor of oxen or horses which we know to be, though immensely less in amount, yet actually of very considerable consideration in the estimate of our New England wealth.

I have already adverted to the amount of capital vested in slaves by those who differing from Dr. Channing consider a slave as their property. It is of little moment whether we take the Southern estimate as correct, and consider the slaves of the United States as equivalent in worth to five hundred millions of dollars, or deducting one half, estimate them at two hundred and fifty millions of dollars, the smaller sum is of such enormous magnitude that it will answer the purposes of illustration as well as the larger.*

The professed owners of this property are of every grade and class of society in point of wealth, integrity and reputation, from the affluent planter with his thousand negroes, to the day laborer who owns a single boy perhaps to diminish his mechanical drudgery ; from the statesman of high intelligence, and the clergyman of acknowledged probity, whose domestic establishments are served by their bondsmen and bondswomen, to the keeper of the gambling house or the bagnio, to whose deeds of infamy these servile subjects lend their en-

*Since this was written I have seen an estimate by which the value of slaves in the United States is estimated to be more than EIGHT HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

forced assistance. It is doubtful whether in the free States there is any one article of property which enters so extensively and minutely into all the ramifications of society. Our society is more divided into portions and detachments, having a general connexion to be sure, but not that intimate and close union which binds the inhabitants to the common interests of slavery. When our woollen interest was threatened, the manufacturers of cotton thought they could get along pretty well. When our navigation interest was in danger, the commerce of the country most closely allied to it did not feel the apprehension of immediate dissolution. If at this moment any one or two of our most productive occupations were closed by a war or a tariff that should ruin them, the rest might go on with only their proportional share in the common calamity. But Slavery wherever it exists is the sensorium of the country. It is the one nerve which runs through the whole political body and connects every part of it with the seat of life.

Now before Slavery can cease in the United States this vast property must be annihilated. It must be surrendered by consent of its owners or wrested from them by force of war.

An overwhelming and well appointed army not less numerous than Napoleon led into Russia, might in process of time overrun the country and making desolation call it peace. Such an army would give the abolitionist some reason to hope that Slavery might be destroyed. He might expect in the lust of conquest to find the slave and his master in one common grave. Force can do any thing. But to expect that the Southern slave holders will voluntarily relinquish their possession and title to the property which they claim in their slaves, is a stretch of credulity that has as yet no parallel in the history of human delusion.

Of the tenacity with which mankind cling to the possession of property, we are not to judge by estimating its intrinsic title to their regard, but by practice, experience and a knowledge of human wants, passions and desires. He is a poor

teacher who in estimating the operation of motives and the causes of action takes mankind as he would have them and not as they are. He is a false guide in any expedition for the benefit of society, who takes the road he should prefer without first ascertaining if it be practicable.

Two hundred and fifty millions of dollars must be sacrificed by about four millions of people. Let us examine this matter by bringing it home to ourselves. Taking round numbers it would be equivalent to a tax of four millions five hundred thousand dollars on the City of Boston — or upwards of thirty-six millions of dollars for the State, and more than one hundred millions of dollars for the six New England States.

I have all reasonable faith in the generosity, the spirit and the nobleness of my fellow-citizens, but if it were asked of them to take this immense amount and pour it as a votive gift into the ocean, or gather it and burn it on their lofty hills as a beacon fire in honor of freedom and to relieve the Southern slaves from their intolerable bondage, who ventures to believe he would live long enough to see the consummation of so much moral glory? Or suppose it was to be asked of us to pay only our proportionate share of a general assessment on the United States for the indemnity of the slave holders, would the City of Boston be willing to contribute its amount of one million and three quarters, or the State its quota of seventeen millions and a half?

If here then, where there is such an abhorrence of slavery, where there is so much high principle, where so many think it morally wrong, there would be found some difficulty in obtaining a contribution large enough to purchase ease to our own consciences, by relieving the country of this awful iniquity, what may be expected in the slave districts, where there is no such feeling, and of whose freemen we ask not to *contribute* merely, but to take upon themselves the whole load — to reduce themselves to want — their families to beggary and their country to ruin.

But the loss of the slave as property, immense as it is,

forms a small part of the injury which the Abolitionist proposes, as that injury is estimated at the South.

It is the prevalent opinion there that a great part of the land is susceptible only of slave cultivation, and that without this kind of labor their fine fields would be desolate. What the fact may be I am unable to say — perhaps it may be true only to a limited extent. It is the opinion and not the fact which the Abolitionist must encounter before he can persuade the planter to give freedom to his bondsman, but he must satisfy the Northern people not of the opinion but of the fact, and assure them that their cotton, sugar, rice and tobacco will come to them as it now does, or he may find some little resistance here to his glorious scheme of universal liberty. It will be a poor argument in the way of traffic to persuade the Northern freemen to contribute their millions to redeem the country from the sin of slavery, to tell them that the property they have preserved will not command the accustomed conveniences of life. Whether this labor could be done by freemen, and would, if there were no slaves, be done to any considerable extent by freemen, is a problem we may never be called upon practically to settle, nor is it of moment that we should. There are some conditions in life that no state or circumstance can make more deplorable, if it does not cause actual corporeal pain ; and a man, whose lot it may be to work in a rice swamp, or toil in a cotton field, to whom nothing but that unvarying drudgery is appointed by Providence, without hope or possibilty of change, may thank Heaven that in its mercy it ordained him not to be free.

These are some of the difficulties in the way of abolition and by what motives are they to be overcome ? Dr. Channing proposes to melt the iron chain of the slave by the soft breath of peace ; he expects to dissolve his fetters by the charm of words.

He tells the slave owner that he cannot have property in a human being — that to hold him as property is " to inflict a great wrong, to incur the guilt of oppression" ; " that man has received sacred, inalienable rights, which are violated by

slavery." That slavery is a mighty evil, and he proceeds to argue out these positions with all the learning of the schools.

If he spoke with the voice of an Archangel and carried conviction to every planter in the whole region of slavery, it is hard to believe that such conviction would have any effect. Human nature must be improved and sublimated vastly beyond its present standard before such arguments on such a subject would have any practical effect.

But the whole of this reasoning will fall on deaf ears and marble hearts. It will not be credited for a moment. Education, custom, habits, all the forms of society, all the modes and manners of life combine to raise an atmosphere that will not transmit the sound. The law of the land refutes it. The teachings of the reverend, the learned, the eminent among them confound it. The immortal leader of the armies of freedom was a slave holder. The draftsman of the Declaration of Independence was a slave holder. The eminent patriot to whom more than to any living man we owe the constitution of the United States was a slave holder, and their example will in the land of their nativity outweigh all the eloquence and all the learning of a whole colony of mere talking clergymen.

The slave region has pronounced its decision. Within its borders Slavery shall not be discussed. The people do not mean by any affectation of liberality to endanger their social system. They believe it is right, but they mean to maintain it wrong or right. Upon this subject they ask no instruction and they permit none. They have taken their stand. They refute all argument by silencing it, and to all force they are prepared for resistance.

In this condition of things all hope of exterminating Slavery is desperate by any other means than open determined professed hostility; by an active, vigorous and destructive civil war.

CHAPTER V.

The difficulty already stated might appal ordinary minds, but there is nothing too arduous for the efforts of fanaticism ; nothing too quixotic for the knight erranty of religious reformers.

Let us then look at the case in another point of view. The masters of slaves, it is admitted, are not at present in a temper of mind to give them liberty and the slaves themselves are not in a condition to receive it. What are the means of abolition.

"I *only* ask"—says Dr. C.—"that the slave holding States should resolve conscientiously and in good faith to remove this greatest of moral evils and wrongs, and would bring *immediately* to the work all their intelligence, virtue and power."

The extreme simplicity of this modest request shews the value of the proposal for all practical purposes. It is only that the whole population of the slave district should change its habits, manners, feelings, tastes, inclinations, principles, objects, wants and wishes. It is only that while they think themselves in perfect health they should believe this physician of souls that they are gangrened at the heart. It only that for the purpose of curing a disease of which they are not sensible, they should submit not merely a spouting artery to be tied up by this skilful surgeon, but as if there were any hope of life in the experiment, make bare the whole vascular system to be dissected from the quivering trunk.

This little operation seems not even to our author to be quite definite enough in its plan, and the matter is therefore persued further into detail.

"The Church should rest not day or night till this stain be wiped away."

Mathias professed to be a prophet. The elect Lady claimed to work miracles. The Mormonites have some pretence

to supernatural power, but none of them ever ventured on a greater extravagance than this. In a contest with Slavery the Church itself would be destroyed, so far at least as its influence in other respects would be concerned. But the Church is first to be persuaded. The Church at the South is composed of slave-holders. Its priests and its levites are slave-holders. Its temples are erected, its altars are maintained, its offerings are purchased with the labor of slaves.

But says Dr. C. "Government should devote itself to this, as its great object. Legislatures should meet to free the slave."

This is, indeed, somewhat alarming.

Force, power, authority are to interfere, and what cannot be accomplished by argument, is to be made successful by the arm of the law. Religious reformers have, in all ages, been persecutors. They have depended on reason and logic when they have had no better means of persuasion; and resorted to penalties, fines, imprisonment, the scaffold and the stake, whenever the power to do so has come into their hands. Mahometan and Christian are in this alike. All sects of Christianity have stained their fair fame by similar iniquity; and while we supposed that a better system and a purer faith now prevailed in the world, and that the fires of Smithfield had been extinguished forever, the head of the liberal clergy, in the advance of the nineteenth century, proposes to change the whole domestic arrangements of the greater part of a continent, and to demolish what many millions of people deem to be their right of property, by the power of government and the aid of legislatures!! The moral reformer, who suggests this mode of attaining his object, abandons his own cause.

But government and legislatures, in our day, are not what they once were. Government and legislatures are but another name for the people. Slave-holders, in the slave country, make them; and they, who are thus created, are slave-holders themselves. To call on government to put down Slavery, shews rather a disposition to use power than a knowledge of its character. It is more absurd than to call on the

Pope and his Cardinals to abolish superstition ; and of about as much value as the vote which enrolled the Emperor Alexander among the members of the Peace Society of Massachusetts.

There is yet another day-dream of the learned Doctor, which would amuse us by its extreme childishness, if the honest simplicity in which it is made, did not redeem it from ridicule.

"Were the colored population [of the slave States] to be assembled in Sunday schools, and were the whites to become their teachers, a new and interesting relation would be formed between the races, and an influence be exerted which would do much to ensure the gift of freedom."

There is certainly no gainsaying this proposition. The overseer might teach them their catechism. The field-driver, somewhat accustomed to the task of instruction, might give them lessons in the alphabet ; and the masters, when they were further advanced, might impress upon their minds Dr. Channing's homilies on the theory of property, and prove that all claim to it in a human being is altogether false and groundless.

Were this to be done ! Oh time most reasonably to be expected, under the joint operation of "preaching," "government," and "legislatures."

I came very near having a present to-day, said a boy to his mother. How so, my dear ? Why, I asked a man to give me his dog, and he said no ; if he had only said yes, I should have brought him home.

But there are solemn considerations connected with this subject. The present inability of the slave population to receive freedom is admitted in the book before us ; and the impossibility that the life of the slave should be long enough for him to acquire the necessary knowledge, is a proposition quite as demonstrable. That a few negroes may be made free without essential evil, is no exception to this truth. The question to be met and settled is, what would be the result of an entire change in the whole relations of society ; and anx-

iously as I could wish it were otherwise, deeply and sincerely as I deplore the awful and tremendous evil with which the country is visited, strongly, as a freeman and a Christian, I would implore that the liberty and the light of the one and the other might be safely shed upon the heart of every bondsman in the Union, I do yet as solemnly and sincerely believe that abolition, and even the prospect of it, would bring desolation upon the white man and death to the slave.

With all these modes and appliances to boot, it hardly seems that our author contemplates a substantial freedom to the slaves. He puts them like a boy on his coasting-sled, but seems to dread the velocity of their motion, and to try vainly to stop them in their way.

It is rather a transfer of masters than a freedom from all ownership, that is proposed. It is not, after all, that the slave is not to be considered as property, but that he is not to be the property of the present claimants. Thus it is said :

"It may be asked whether, in calling the slave-holding States to abolish property in the slave, I intend that he should be immediately set free from all his present restraints. By no means. Nothing is further from my thoughts. The slave cannot rightfully and should not be owned by the individual. But, like every other citizen, *he belongs to the community;* he is subject to the community, and the community has a right and is bound to continue all such restraints as its own safety, as the well-being of the slave demand. It would be cruelty, not kindness, to the latter, to give him a freedom which he is unprepared to understand or enjoy."

I confess I do not understand this nice distinction. I am sure the slave would not comprehend it Whether he is under one man or all men, he is a slave still. How he can cease to be property and yet belong to and be the property of the State, I do not perceive. Between Slavery and freedom there is no middle ground. To change masters merely is a mockery, which the most degraded and ignorant would feel to be an insult as cruel as bondage. If the negro is not a citizen, he is a slave still, call him by what name you please. If he is a citizen and debarred the rights of a citizen, the title is a deception, and the deception is a fraud.

Slavery is an evil. The slave feels it to be so. But in what does he think the evil consists ? In its physical, not its moral deprivations. Of these, the majority know nothing, and no more feel the want of them than the brute animals with whom they labor.

The freedom that they seek for is relaxation from toil, from restraint, from industry. The liberty they desire is the liberty of sensual indulgences — to eat, drink, dance, sing, and sleep, in idleness and ease. We see this in the free negroes who have once been slaves. It is the peculiarity of their character. They do indeed work, because freedom alone will not support them ; but they work no more than to keep soul and body together, or to get the means of gratifying their appetites for pleasure ; and through the whole slave country they are careless, thoughtless, improvident, idle, and most generally vicious, vile, indigent and miserable.

It was for no high moral objects that the insurrection it St. Domingo was excited. It is for no moral improvement that the liberated slaves of that garden of the West Indies have made it comparatively a desert. It is for no high and honorable objects that the English slaves enjoy their emancipation.

The keeper of the Menagarie who has taken from their native forests the lordly Lion and the reasoning Elephant, keeps them in subjection by his iron bars and chain of steel, and fearlessly with the whip in one hand puts the other into their mouths, or lays himself between their feet. Let him give them the prospect of liberty. Let him take them upon the common and tie them by a thread to the great tree and see then if he can practice his gambols with impunity.

I hold in as high estimation as Dr. C. the grandeur of our common nature. I know as well as he does its aspiring and heaven-directed character. Slavery is not its natural condition. It can be kept there by nothing but oppressive, heavy immoveable physical force. Relax the cords and they will be broken. Loosen the bars and the imprisoned victim escapes. He escapes as a ferocious wild beast from the toils of the hunter. He flies as a half tamed savage on his enemy.

He springs with all the violence of excited passion, with all the madness of insatiate vengeance, with the fury of stern, malignant, deep seated and ferocious revenge upon all that now are deemed his foes.

The security of the master and the slave can exist only by superiority of power.

The change to be wrought in the heart of the slave to make him a tame and safe freemen is not less in amount and kind than is to be produced in the heart of the white man, to persuade him into the generosity of giving away his property and beggaring himself.

The slave thinks he has been injured, long, deeply, wantonly injured, and the very restoration of his freedom as his right is an acknowledgment of the fact. And is it to be believed he will not seek his revenge ?

Nothing but the want of power now restrains him. Has he remembrance of the stripes of his vassalage ? Does he recollect that his naked limbs have been examined in the market of human flesh ? Does he " see the scar of the lash on the back of his wife ? Does he feel that his home has been desecrated, that the tenderest relations, intended by God equally for all, and intended to be the chief springs of happiness and virtue have been sported with wantonly and cruelly ?" And will not a deep and deadly revenge be the first, strongest and most constant sentiment of his heart. The slave has been too deeply injured to be a safe citizen.

It may be said with truth that one wrong is no excuse for another. But we are addressing motives to the slave-holder to liberate his slaves, and he tells you what nobody doubts, that the moment he gives them the opportunity they will cut his throat. He may settle the moral account as he can with his conscience, but it is the extremity of folly to suppose that with such an apprehension he will ever make the experiment.

There has been no insurrection among the slaves in which, however temporary their power, it has not been exerted with dreadful cruelty and acts horrible to humanity. To implant

better principles is a pious but a very hopeless task. For eighteen hundred years the world has enjoyed the light of Christianity, and yet we are daily witnesses of its feebleness to restrain the excesses of human passion. How many generations of slaves are to pass away in moral discipline before the descendants of the present are to be competent to freedom ?

CHAPTER VI.

If the object is impracticable, which our author proposes, the book is useless. If Slavery be the law of our national existence it is idle to urge its abolition. But we are pressed with a strong moral obligation.

We are bound it is said to use every virtuous influence for the abolition of slavery. "We are bound to encourage a manly religious discussion of it."

I wholly deny these propositions. I see no obligation to interfere with the domestic laws of the South in regard to Slavery any more than with the internal affairs of any private domicil in the country. We have not made those laws and we cannot repeal them. If there are slaves there they do not belong to us. We cannot give them freedom. If Slavery be a great sin it does not lie upon our consciences. There are other sins which it would be well to remove. There are sins at home quite enough to give occupation to all our thoughts, energies and prayers. Why not first purify ourselves. Why not shake off that narrow contracted bigotry which deifys ourselves, and which may be seen even among some of the most liberal religionists ? Why not endeavor to get rid of that priestly tendency to domination which is not confined to the Vatican ?

Are we to preach up a general crusade against sin ? We may find a world of labor on our hands, and much that is quite

as horrible and quite as immoveable as domestic Slavery. I am at a loss to ascertain why this sin of other people, in which we have no agency, bears so heavily on our hearts, unless, like the mother of Cuddie Headrig, in Old Mortality, we are ready to exclaim — "With this auld and brief breath will I testify against the backslidings, defections, defalcations, and declinings of the land, against the grievances and the causes of wrath"!

But it seems to me, if we are bound to *talk* so much, we may be obliged to *do* something. We must do what we can to give efficacy to our preaching. We must not ease our consciences altogether at the expense of other people. We must profess our willingness to share the loss which will fall on our dear friends at the South, when they take our gratuitous advice and give liberty to their slaves. Are we ready to do this?

We must refuse, certainly, to share the gains of these man-destroyers and oppressors of human rights. If they have stolen the labor of the African, we may not be receivers of the spoil. We must taste none of the sugar, eat none of the rice, wear none of the cotton, purchase at no price any other article which is the product of slave labor. When the Reverend teacher has acted on his own principles, and proves to us that in this respect he keeps himself unspotted from the sin of Slavery, he may have some better right to read us the lecture, which, as one having authority, he has so assumingly bestowed upon us.

I hold this duty of abstinence to be the imperative duty of the moral abolitionist. He who sees the tears of the slave on his cotton, or finds his blood in his sugar, should as religiously abstain from the one and the other as a Jew from pork or a Mussulman from wine.

If this little personal sacrifice is somewhat startling, if we are not quite ready to stop the mills at Lowell at the command of this fanciful morality, or close half the commerce of the world in devotion to our new faith, it behooves us to look

a little to the probability of its enforcement if we press very hard "this religious discussion."

It is impossible that the slaves can be easy under the agitation of the question. They know it, feel it, and will act upon it. A continuance of this discussion will cause insurrection, whether such object be intended or not.

I will not enumerate the reasons for this assertion. They have been elsewhere presented, and are obvious enough.

The press and the pen shed their influence everywhere. Fanatics are hardy enough to go into the slave country; and their very deaths by a mob convey knowledge to the slave.

The discussion of Slavery, in the manner and with the principles of our author, will, I venture to affirm, set those materials on fire, which in their own nature are almost inflammable enough to blaze by spontaneous combustion.

Now look at the consequences here, as well as in the slave country. Would the cause of morality be promoted by the crimes of insurrection and a servile war?

Are the sufferings of the slaves, in which we are invited to feel so much sympathy, comparable to what would be endured by our own laboring poor, if, for a single year the Southern crop should fail for want of cultivation?

If the slaves must toil with wholesome and reasonable labor, or our own people must starve, though they double their exertions, which alternative does a wise and sound morality direct us to choose?

This sensibility for the negro may be well enough when it can be indulged without injury to our own flesh and blood; but it is the poor and sickly offspring of a diseased mind, when it passes over the deeper and nearer sufferings of our friends with comparative indifference.

Such a false sympathy is, however, the constant indication of the book before us.

Dr. Channing tells a tale intended to raise this pity.

"I once passed a colored woman at work on a plantation, who was singing apparently with animation, and whose general manners would have led me to set her down as the happiest of the gang. I said to her, "Your work seems

pleasant to you." She replied, "No, Massa." Supposing that she referred to something particularly disagreeable in her immediate occupation, I said to her, "Tell me, then, what part part of your work is most pleasant." She answered, with much emphasis, "*No part* pleasant. We *forced* to do it." These few words let me into the heart of the slave. I saw under its apparent lightness a human heart."

And if the woman had been taken from her gang, and put down safely in State street, and there told she was free, would she not be equally forced to work? Would she not be surrounded by a busy and active population, moving through daily toil and labor by the same force? "*Forced to do it*"! How many of our own people are glad of the opportunity of being forced to labor.

Possibly it may be found that the description of the abolitionists which our author has drawn, is the picture of his own book. He has "fallen into the common error of enthusiasts, that of exaggerating their object, of feeling as if no evil existed but that which they opposed, and as if no guilt could be compared with that of countenancing and upholding it."

The view which I take of the moral duty of an American citizen, in regard to the discussion of Slavery, is to leave it to the regulation of those in whose territories it exists.

I feel that our Constitution was a compromise, in which we agreed that each State should in its own domestic affairs be sovereign and independent; and that it is the highest violation of all moral principle to infringe on this obligation. I cannot reconcile it to my conscience, while I daily and hourly enjoy the blessings of this republican government, to take back any part of the price that was paid for it.

In all codes of morality honesty holds the first place, and I deem it dishonest, as it is dishonorable, to do that by indirect means which I am prohibited from doing openly and avowedly before the world. If insurrection breaks out among the slaves — if war and its atrocities are the consequence — if that mass of human beings are induced to act out the principles of abolition, and seize by force the rights and liberties which they are told by a preacher of the gospel are their's, in

spite of all law of man's device — if because they are images of God, and may not be made slaves, — arguing from these principles, and feeling they are men they use men's weapons to repossess themselves of their birthright, no drop of the vast torrent of blood that is to flow shall be laid to my account. If it be wrong to have made them slaves or to hold them so, if in the Court of Heaven they who imposed upon them the mark of degradation are made answerable for a condition of things which at prescnt no human eye sees the manner of preventing, I shall feel no need of an angel's tear to blot from the Chancery of Heaven any share of mine or my New England countrymen in the reckoning of the great day of account; but I would not be an accessory to insurrection by aiding or abetting it, or counciling it by any word of encouragement that even against my wishes might probably tend to produce it, for any earthly consideration.

I say nothing of the political duty of a citizen of Massachusetts to abstain from conduct which is dangerous to the peace of our fellew-cıtizens at the South, because men whose conscience obliges them to carry on a moral war think nothing of political duty. But I concur most unhesitatingly in the opinion which has been publicly advanced by distinguished jurists among us, and is a very general opinion among the profession of the law, that any measures obviously tending to produce insurrection are equally a violation of political duty as those that are intended to excite it. Men are legally answerable for the natural consequences of their actions. A government would be absurdly defective in power which could not prevent the infraction of its peace, and as absurdly ignorant not to know that other governments require it to prevent its citizens from intermeddling in their internal affairs. Neither do I say any thing of the cruelty to the negro, bond or free, which these publications cause under the guise of humanity. This topic has been also well enforced. We see it practically in our own colored population. Their character is wasting under the operation of a too sublimated morality. We shall make worthless vagabonds of hitherto harmless and orderly citizens.

CHAPTER VII.

If Slavery is an evil, the generous and enterprising spirit of our countrymen does not incline them to sit down and tamely submit to it. What is to be done ? I answer NOTHING. It is not desirable that domestic Slavery should cease in the United States.

On this point I must borrow a favorite expression of Dr. C. and " beg that I may not be misunderstood."

It is not desirable that domestic Slavery should cease, because by the laws of our nature and according to all the calculations we can make, it could not be terminated in any way that would not produce vastly more aggravated and extensive evils than are suffered by its continuance.

It is the fault or the folly of the abolitionist that he will not look on things as they are. He surveys them through the misty medium of a false and deceptive sensibility, which magnifies and distorts them and conceals others vastly more alarming.

A practical statesman is bound to survey the condition of actual existence and all the relations of the subject he proposes to change. A practical moralist would not be justified in expunging one crime by the admission of twenty. White men as well as negroes are to be taken into the account, and the general happiness of all is the subject of discussion.

If Slavery did not exist in the country, the question of introducing it would be setted by acclamation. No solitary voice would call it into being. If, like Columbus we now stood upon the borders of a virgin world, and had what his great genius could not command, power to direct by whom it should be settled, or if over any part of it, like one of the eminent men of New England, we had been favored by Providence with the right to say who should occupy its borders, all would join him in the recorded mandate of the Ordinance for settling the Western Territory — *our soil shall never be pol-*

luted by Slavery. We have no such power. Slavery exists. There are more than two millions of slaves among us. What can be done ?

To keep them in Slavery is an evil, but not the unmitigated evil which it is represented by the overstrained sensibility of enthusiasts. Heaven in its mercy never permits such unalloyed evil to exist. The slaves as a class are better fed, better clad, less worked, and have less care and anxiety about their condition, than a great proportion of the hard working day-laborers in freedom. As they are deemed to be property there is no inducement to treat them inhumanly. If the work which they perform is to be performed by anybody, it is not probable that it could be done with less physical suffering than it is by the slaves. Our humanity need not be pained on this account.*

Still the evils of Slavery are very great. What would be the evils of abolition.

First the war, bloodshed and crime, by which it is to be secured.

In the present condition of things no man, who retains his common sense, whatever his wishes may be, can for a moment believe that the slaves of the United States will ever become free by the consent of their masters. When the crisis arrives it is to be accomplished in blood. I will not enlarge on this topic. It is too painful. He who can for a moment contemplate the white men and white women of our Southern States in the hands of their negroes, ignorant, frantic, lustful and ferocious, and feel any satisfaction that by these means their liberty is to be secured to them, must have very strange notions of Christian morality.

If, however, by some supernatural operation — which is too

*It is doubtful if a child was ever in the slave country compelled to eat its own fæces, as was proved in Pike's case at Salem; or was subjected to the punishment of being tied under its arms and suspended in the vault of a necessary, as was proved in the case of a child of ten years old, in this city, some years since. The case of Washburn *vs.* Knight, tried in our Supreme Court, was unequalled for a series of cruelties which were proved, to the absolute horror of the jury. A man who would not harm a horse because he is his property, will sometimes delight in torturing a fellow-being, in whose existence he has no pecuniary interest. There are tyrants everywhere.

fanciful to be made the subject of speculation — the owners would consent to give them up, and by a like miracle they could acquire the means of understanding the value of freedom, there are yet other evils of vastly more amount than the present evils of Slavery.

Suppose them to emerge from Slavery, intelligent, moral and industrious, with all the capacity and inclinations of the white man.

They would be negroes still. Two distinct classes of men could not live upon terms of equality in the same country and under the same government. The more their intelligence, the greater would be the mutual hostility of the two races; and the final possession of power would be the result of a war of extermination, in which one or the other race would perish.

Is it supposed they could amalgamate? God forbid! This is a matter of sentiment and taste, to be sure, upon which the feelings are to be umpires. There are those who see nothing disgusting in such an idea. But I fearlessly aver that if this be the tendency and the result of our moral reformation, rather than our white Saxon race should degenerate into a tribe of tawney-colored Quadroons, rather than that our fair and beauteous females should give birth to the thick-lipped, woolly-headed children of African fathers, rather than the nice and delicate character of the American woman, which in its freshness and its pride is at once the cause and the consequence of civilization, should be debased and degraded by such indiscriminate and beastly connexion, rather than the negro should be seated in the halls of Congress and his sooty complexion glare upon us from the bench of justice, rather than he should mingle with us in the familiar intercourse of domestic life and taint the atmosphere of our homes and firesides, — I WILL BRAVE MY SHARE OF ALL THE RESPONSIBILITY OF KEEPING HIM IN SLAVERY.

CHAPTER VIII.

Dr. Channing reproves the abolitionists, and reprobates mobs. In these respects his book conforms to public sentiment. The conduct of the abolitionists is bad, and that of mobs worse; but how one or the other can be the appropriate subject of his animadversion is not easily perceived.

A man who adopts his doctrine may be expected to act upon it. A very little infusion of zeal would make such an one a fanatic. If he preserved his reason to enable him to act consistently, and believed his immortal welfare depended *on reforming other people's sins*, he could hardly be blamed for any extravagance of action. The abolitionist, if he is sincere, must be extravagant. The blame rests on those who inculcate the principle, rather than on the disciple who receives it.

Hence it is that in the book the reproof is very moderate, and mingled with much praise. Indeed it is received in kindness by its objects. Their leading Journal, certainly edited with much talent and ability, has proclaimed Dr. Channing to be the prince of abolitionists.

In respect to mobs, they are well represented as the usurpers of the people's rights, and the impersonation of despotism. It would be well if the sentiment expressed recently in the face of one of them by a worthy Alderman of our City could be adopted by our whole community, over my dead body, — said he, — shall they only be able to triumph over the laws.

Still to a practical moralist the question returns, whether he who does that which will excite a mob, is not in some degree guilty of its excesses.

Suppose he only exercises his abstract right. If he knows before hand the probable consequences of his action, how much of the blame attaches to himself? Because he may

strike a spark with his own flint and steel, shall he be permitted to do so over a cask of gunpowder ?

It is said if he does right and the mob wrong, the blame is theirs and not his. I agree that they are blameable and punishable, but is he also, under these circumstances, free from censure ?

If we take human nature as we find it, we are sure that men, physically free, will resent what they deem insult and injustice ; and, when they know the law will not redress the supposed wrong, that they will take the remedy into their own hands.

He, therefore, who advertises an abolition meeting, if he has reasonable ground to believe it will produce a disturbance of the public peace, has an account to settle with his conscience, should such disturbance follow.

If meat — says the apostle — maketh my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world lasteth.

Upon principles of established law I have some doubt in regard to the legality of meetings which are known beforehand to be the cause of a mob. A man was recently subjected to punishment by common law (which is our law) for exhibiting ludicrous pictures in his shop window, whereby a crowd was collected that obstructed the streets. There was nothing improper in the pictures, and they were placed in the man's own shop. But day after day people collected around them, and all business in the neighborhood was prevented. Good sense, says the Court, requires that he shall not so use his own right, that by the common operation of human motives the peace of the community will necessarily be disturbed.*

It has long been law that a mountebank who collects a crowd in the streets in front of his place of exhibition, to the disturbance of the neighborhood, is a nuisance ; and what is an abolition meeting but a *new kind of* HARLEQUINADE, in

* Carlisle's case, tried in the King's Bench, 1st December, 1834. 6th vol. Carrington and Payne, 636.

which people are invited to see how the ocean might be bailed dry with a clam-shell?

These mobs will cease when such spectacles cease. All good citizens will discountenance them under all circumstances and at all times. But if the tide of popular feeling bursts its barriers and sweeps over the laws, the blame attaches to those whose moon-sick fancies raise these unmanageable floods.

Reformers often despise all considerations which interpose between them and their objects. They are carried away by an enthusiasm, which disregards the elements; and though sometimes on great occasions their zeal may be the cause of success, it more generally makes shipwreck of their enterprise. It would be better to let discretion be their tutor. Prudence, if it be a homely virtue, is always a safe one.

Nullum numen abest
Si sit Prudentia tecum.

I have no doubt Dr. Channing thinks his book will do the State some services. In exposing its errors I think the same.

The freedom with which I have done this is not inconsistent with a high respect for his talents and his character. It is demanded by a higher regard to the tranquillity of the country, the preservation of the Union and the cause of TRUTH.

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